

Michael F. Easley
Governor



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GOV. EASLEY URGES RESIDENTS TO PLAN AHEAD AS HURRICANE SEASON NEARS *Proclaims May 16-22 as Hurricane Preparedness Week*

RALEIGH – As hurricane season approaches, Gov. Mike Easley is urging residents to start planning ahead by assembling family emergency preparedness kits, identifying evacuation routes and knowing where shelters will be located.

“North Carolinians are all too familiar with the devastation that hurricanes can wreak and it is imperative that people take steps to help protect their loved ones and property,” said Easley, who has proclaimed May 16-22 as Hurricane Preparedness Week.

“Advance preparation is key to saving lives,” he said. “People cannot wait until a hurricane is right off the coast to get prepared. They should begin to plan now for what is needed to be ready if authorities call for an evacuation or if power is lost for several days.”

National weather experts are predicting that eight hurricanes and 14 named storms will develop in the Atlantic Basin this year, above the average of six hurricanes and 10 named storms. The predicted above-active storm season runs from June through November and has a 68 percent chance of at least one major storm hitting the U.S. coastline.

Last year also saw above-average storm activity with 14 named storms, seven hurricanes and three intense hurricanes, including Hurricane Isabel. Damages from Hurricane Isabel were nearly \$168 million in North Carolina.

“Some citizens are still making repairs to their homes or businesses following Hurricane Isabel,” said Secretary Bryan Beatty of the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety. “People should heed the warnings and advice of local officials as storms approach.”

Before hurricane season starts, residents should know where to evacuate, what to do with family pets and to have a contact person that family members can notify in case they become separated.

Most deaths occur during clean up after the storm. People should be extremely careful around fallen trees and power lines, have mosquito repellent with DEET on hand as well as sturdy shoes and boots with heavy gloves, and if using a chain saw, know how to use it.

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